



**Office of the Attorney General
Paul G. Summers**

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ATTORNEY GENERAL ANNOUNCES “WE THE PEOPLE” WILL REFORM ITS
BUSINESS PRACTICES AND PAY REFUNDS**

Attorney General Paul G. Summers has reached an agreement with We The People, a self-described “legal document preparation company.” The State sued the national We The People corporation and its Nashville and Knoxville franchises in 2004, alleging violations of the Tennessee unauthorized practice of law statutes and the Tennessee Consumer Protection Act.

We The People will make a payment of \$90,000 that will be available to be distributed as refunds to eligible consumers, make a \$40,000 payment to the State and pay \$30,000 for the State’s attorneys’ fees and costs as part of the agreement.

“This was hard fought litigation and I am pleased with the result,” Attorney General Summers said. “This agreement protects Tennesseans from practices we consider to be unfair and deceptive. Prior to settling this case, my office convinced We The People to stop using several of their advertisements which we viewed as deceptive and misleading. Consumers will now know that if they choose to use We The People, they will only receive typing, forms or written overviews - none of which can take the place of the advice and services of competent, independent lawyers who are licensed to practice in Tennessee.”

Under the restitution plan, consumers who purchased products or services from We The People in Nashville and Knoxville will receive a notice and accompanying claim form to complete and return to be eligible for a refund. If consumers have moved since they purchased products or services from We The People, they are encouraged to call the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Line at (615) 741-1671 or toll-free (in Tennessee) at (877) 275-7396 and give their name, current address, telephone number and the We The People product or service purchased.

Attorney General Summers said he wanted to make sure Tennesseans had all the facts before determining whether they need assistance in legal matters and before they pay for services that may not be effective. “When questions or concerns related to topics such as divorce, wills, or bankruptcy arise, many people must decide whether to hire an attorney or to attempt to represent themselves without the expertise of a trained attorney,” General Summers said. “In Tennessee, a person who is not licensed to practice law cannot engage in the practice of law or operate a law business. Licensed Tennessee lawyers are regulated by the Board of Professional Responsibility and the Tennessee Supreme Court.”

If you are unable to afford a lawyer, you may be able to seek help from public interest law firms, *pro bono* or free legal services administered by law firms and bar associations, a legal aid organization, or legal forms approved by the Administrative Office of the Courts or local courts. State and local bar associations offer a Lawyer Referral Service. Referral services are available by calling the following numbers: East Tennessee (865) 522-7501; Middle and West Tennessee (615) 242-6546; and Southeast Tennessee (423) 756-3222.

Free legal help for low-income or disabled people may be available if needed. If you have a legal problem but cannot afford to pay for a lawyer, you can contact one of the following Legal Aid Offices to find the regional office nearest your home and determine if you qualify for assistance: Memphis Area Legal Services, (901) 523-8822; Southeast Tennessee Legal Services (Chattanooga) (423) 756-0128 or (800) 836-0128; West Tennessee Legal Services (Jackson) (731) 423-0616 or (800) 372-8346; Legal Aid of East Tennessee (Knoxville) (865) 637-0484; Legal Aid of Middle Tennessee (Nashville) (615) 244-6610 or (800) 238-1443; Legal Assistance for the Elderly (Knoxville) - Serving persons age 60 and older (865) 691-2551 ext. 223 or (800) 362-9276; Aging Services for Upper Cumberland (Cookeville) - Serving persons age 60 and older (931) 432-4210; and Southern Migrant Legal Services - Serving immigrant and migrant worker communities (866) 721-7828.

If you used a non-lawyer individual or service that types forms for your legal matters and feel that you were harmed, or if you have information or a complaint about a non-lawyer engaging in the unauthorized practice of law, please contact the Consumer Advocate and Protection Division of the Tennessee Attorney General's Office. To request an Unauthorized Practice of Law Complaint form, please call (615) 741-1671 or toll-free (in Tennessee) at (877) 275-7396 or download a complaint form at <http://www.attorneygeneral.state.tn.us/cpro/upl.htm>.

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